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ABSTRACT

A description is given of a cooperative program between the Brigham Young College of Education and nearby public high schools. In one instance, in 1978 a high school English teacher was invited to team teach a reading methods class with a faculty member in the College of Education. This endeavor was successful and the teacher continues to teach at the college. In the 1984-86 period, four secondary education professors from the College each volunteered to teach one class in high schools in two partnership school districts. Represented were classes in history, science, math, and psychology for one or two semesters in three high schools. The observations of the professors are recounted. It has been concluded that university colleges of education can benefit from the use of secondary school teachers in their classrooms, and that teacher educators can be professionally renewed by occasionally teaching in secondary school settings. (JD)

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Upgrading BYU Teacher Training in Secondary Education: An Aspect of Partnershipping

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Cooperative arrangements between the BYU Secondary Education Department and the public school partnership districts are described. Benefits to the teacher training program are discussed.

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Upgrading BYU Teacher Training in Secondary Education

An Aspect of Partnershipping

A recurring problem in university teacher training is keeping aging faculties current in their fields, vibrant in their teaching, and informed about what is happening in public schools. It follows that frequently heard criticism of college of education faculties is that their training is irrelevant, obsolete, and very dull.

In addition, many educators have commented on the lack of cooperation between public school and teacher training institutions. It is said that both seem to go their own way without regard for each other. The implications for teachers, particularly new ones, is evident. If training in colleges of education is irrelevant to school practice, then that training is likely to have little influence on what teachers really do.

For example, a high school principal indicated that newly hired BYU graduates were not conversant with a well-known educator whose ideas were being emphasized in his school district. It was later determined that the university's library did not contain one reference by this educator, nor were these ideas being presented in the education course that should have considered it. On another level, a study of ten leading university faculties in science education (Baird and Tolman, 1986) indicated that only 2 of 39 professors in those programs had taught in a high school since 1974.

It is such problems that the partnership of the BYU College of Education and 5 neighboring school districts seeks to address. How can they cooperatively work together to provide improved training for

prospective teachers, and how can BYU insure that its own faculty are informed of the concerns of the schools, keeping current in their own disciplines, and upgrading their own teacher training efforts. These are matters relevant to all teacher training institutions in education.

With the encouragement and assistance of a consultant, John Goodlad, who had concerns about the gulf between university teacher training and the public schools, partnership arrangements were worked out between BYU and nearby school districts. Involved were the Dean of the College of Education and the superintendents of five school districts: Provo, Nebo, Alpine, Jordan and Wasatch.

This paper concerns only one facet of partnership activities: using high school teachers to train College of Education students and the involvement of BYU faculty in secondary school teaching positions.

A High School Teacher Teaching College Students

In regards to a state reading requirement, it was determined in 1978 that specific training in reading would be offered in <u>each</u> major rather than in one large university course. A year later for the English Education group, a highly recommended teacher from a partnership district was invited to team teach a reading methods class with a faculty member in the College of Education. After one term it was apparent that her instruction was of excellent quality, superior to what the university could provide. She was then asked to assume the major responsibility for future English reading methods training. Funding was provided by the university on a consultant basis. Students responded well, especially those who evaluated the class after later becoming full-time teachers themselves. This teacher continues to teach on the BYU campus each

semester. Her role in teacher training is anticipated to be expanded, an indication that her work is being well received. Her primary employment also continues to be in the public schools where she coordinates district secondary school language arts training in addition to teaching English.

As is evident, both the university and the school district cross fertilize in such an arrangement. The most capable person carries on the university training, in this case a public school teacher. On occasion she consults with university faculty who retain the responsibility to supervise the program and award state certification. There is a give and take of both knowledge and practice betweem the university and the schools. Everyone benefits and most of all, the students who are all teachers in training. The secondary students they eventually teach will be the biggest winners in this situation.

Interestingly, there was a sequel to this cooperative arrangement. In the second year of this reading course, the university was so favorably impressed with this high school teacher that it proposed hiring her full-time. Normal doctoral degree requirements for an English BYU faculty position were waived, although an expectation of research publication and the regular three year probation period for tenure were not. Subsequently for a one year trial period, the teacher assumed a full time university assignment but in the end preferred to remain in the public school system. From the point of view of the partnership, this was perhaps the best decision. Certainly in many areas of training and practice, such high school teachers have much to teach their university faculty counterparts. Especially where College of Education faculty are long removed in time from public school experience, or have little

personal background in public school teaching, such relationships seem to have special merit and benefit.

College Teachers Teaching High School Students

In respect to another aspect of cooperative arrangements, the problems of relevancy of university training to the concerns of schools were approached in the following manner. In the 1984-86 period, four BYU secondary education professors, 25 percent of the department, volunteered to teach one class in high schools in two of the partnership school districts. Represented were classes in history, science, math, and psychology for one or two semesters in three high schools. Circumstances leading to the individual arrangement with each school were largely happenstance. In one case, a school had called the university for temporary help to fill an unexpected vacancy, hoping to employ a part-time student. In another instance, the professor had become involved in a PTA project and volunteered to teach a class. In a third instance, the professor had sought an opportunity to voluntarily teach in a school close to the BYU campus. Permissions to work in the schools were obtained from the university. However, in three of the four cases, university assignments were <u>not</u> adjusted, the professors being expected to carry their regular full loads assigned previously by the College of Education. None of the four requested remuneration, although in one case the district insisted on payment since budget had already been allocated for the position.

With one exception, the three professors averaged just over 50 years of age. None had taught in the public schools for at least 10 years and most not for 20. Each of the men was interviewed for 45-60 minutes

following a loosely structured, predetermined set of questions. The intent of the interviews were to ascertain the effects of the experience of teaching in the public schools through self report. Responses of each faculty member were varied but some common themes emerged. These are briefly summarized below.

By and large, the men found students to be typical of high school students they had taught many years previously. Students were described generally to be the same in interest and conduct. Each of the four professors reported a few routine discipline problems which by their comments were rather easily resolved. They noted feeling much more confident and less tentative in their day to day teaching activities than they were as younger teachers. One professor observed that the girls in his class as a group seemed more aggressive in conduct and less passive in this respect than he remembered from his previous experiences. He speculated that this may be more true now than years ago, when discipline problems tended to center almost entirely among the boys.

All of the professors were appreciative of arrangements by the local schools in their behalf. Some administrators took time to observe the professors in the classrooms. In one case an administrator brought other high school teachers to observe some new media and high tech methods being used by that professor in a math class. Parents and students also were generally complementary, some extremely so, of what was done. One professor conducted make up sessions and provided other learning experiences in his home after school hours for interested students. All of the professors regretted not having more time to work with individual students, and that school routines in some cases didn't permit them to

have the same students in the second term. In discussing this point, one professor when interviewed suggested that fewer courses and more classes with the same teacher--a kind of core curriculum--might be a worthwhile approach. The idea is for teachers to work with the same students in several courses in successive years to provide better opportunities for personalized teaching. Knowing students well and establishing more continuity of learning was for this professor a way to enhance instruction.

Two professors in science and history were interested in providing more activity oriented courses than were traditionally taught in their disciplines. They implemented a number of approaches that stressed the doing of science and history rather than just lecturing about them. In this process however, one professor indicated learning a new respect for class planning and preparation time. Due to the lack of published materials that fit his objectives, he estimated about two hours of preparation time was necessary for each class. Though he remained converted to his approach, he recognized that his field does not provide supportive materials and texts for teachers who share his teaching philosophy.

One of the professors also commented on the necessity of teaching more about the utility of his high school subject to motivate and heighten interest. He redesigned his high school math course to accomplish this better. More time will be spent in the future on why this subject has importance and relevance for teenagers. Commendably to develop interest, another professor used films and guests from the community to open up new areas of psychology. To provide more resources,

he also brought in about 75 books from his personal library and worked with the school librarian to develop projects of individual interest.

In terms of their role as BYU teacher trainers, all of the professors said the experience provided them with an excellent laboratory to provide actual in-class training for their university students, allowed the opportunity to model teaching behaviors for those same students, and provided other spontaneous experiences which could be discussed in university classes. Also significantly, each professor expressed that coming back to teach in the high schools gave them more credibility as educators. Several offered anecdotes of how this experience seemed to earn them increased respect from other teachers and contacts in the public school system. They also noted the advantages of being able to refer to actual current day to day experiences as they taught their university classes.

Individually the professors commented on several issues currently facing the public schools. These were brought to their attention in their teaching experiences. For example, what should be the primary role of educational administrators, managers of large groups of people or instructional leaders of their faculties? Similarly, what is the role of the extra-cuirriculum and to what extent it be allowed to infringe on attendance and classroom instruction? Also should secondary school instruction closely reflect university instruction in its intent and purpose? Is instruction unduly controlled by published texts and materials which prevent innovation and experimentation? Are some teaching models better than others and should teachers be able to articulate and evaluate their theories of learning and instructional

practice? What is the role of teacher modeling and personal enthusiasm for learning in the teaching profession? What about class sizes, absenteeism, and responsibility for make up work? While these questions are not new, it was evident during the interview that the professors were thinking again, perhaps in renewed ways, about these larger problems in the context of their current high school experiences.

Positively speaking however, it was clear that all of the faculty felt the teaching experience was worth the substantial personal effort and extra time involved. It was clear that without remuneration or released time, they gave much of themselves but took much away from the experience--experiences that would seem to enhance their effectiveness and upgrade their work as university teacher trainers. Most commendably, one professor expressed how in his years of university teaching he had forgotten how much he enjoyed teenagers--this was the quintessence of the experience for him--a renewal of that feeling. Though his original purpose had been to evaluate the methods he had been teaching in his university classes, it was the enjoyment of being with secondary school students again and the excitement of interacting with that age group that was the most rewarding aspect of the experience. He also believed the day-to-day preparation for his class made him more current in his academic field than he otherwise would have been. His preparation required reading texts that he might not have read in his university work.

Summary

In summary, there is value in secondary school-university cooperation. University colleges of education can benefit from the use of

secondary school teachers in their classrooms. Similarly, College of Education professors can keep themselves professionally renewed and current by occasionally teaching in secondary school settings. While there are evident problems in working out administrative details, this seems to be a worthy agenda item for both universities and public schools working together to do their individual jobs better. We would hope others would try similar arrangements while the spirit of reform is still with us. We can all improve what we do, and we can improve best by working together.

Reference

Baird, Hugh and Tolman, R. (May 1986) "A Comparison of the 1985 NSTA Certification Standards at Ten Leading Universities in the U. S." Prepublication Report. Department of Secondary Education, Brigham Young University.